

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Public Review Draft
STRATEGIC PLAN
April 2006**

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
RESOURCES AGENCY
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Resources
Jim Branham, Executive Officer
11521 Blocker Drive, Auburn, CA 95603
Phone (530) 721-0018
www.sierranevada.ca.gov

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY BOARD MEMBERS

GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENTS (5)

Mike Chrisman, Secretary, Resources Agency
Mike Genest, Director, Department of Finance
B.J. Kirwan, Public Member

Bob Kirkwood, Public Member
Carol Whiteside, Public Member

LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS (2)

By Senate Rules Committee
Byron Sher

By Speaker of the Assembly
John Brissenden

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (6)

North Sierra Sub-region
Brian Dahle, Supervisor, Lassen County

South Central Sierra Sub-region
Louis Boitano, Supervisor, Amador
County

North Central Sierra Sub-region
Kim Yamaguchi, Supervisor, Butte
County

East Sierra Sub-region
Linda Arcularius, Supervisor, Inyo
County

Central Sierra Sub-region
Helen Baumann, Supervisor, El Dorado
County

South Sierra Sub-region
Allen Ishida, Supervisor, Tulare County

NONVOTING LIAISON ADVISERS (3)

By U. S. Secretary of Agriculture
Bernie Weingardt, U. S. Forest Service

Deane Swickard, U. S. Bureau of Land
Management

By U. S. Secretary of the Interior

Mike Tollefson, U.S. National Park
Service

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Jim Branham

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

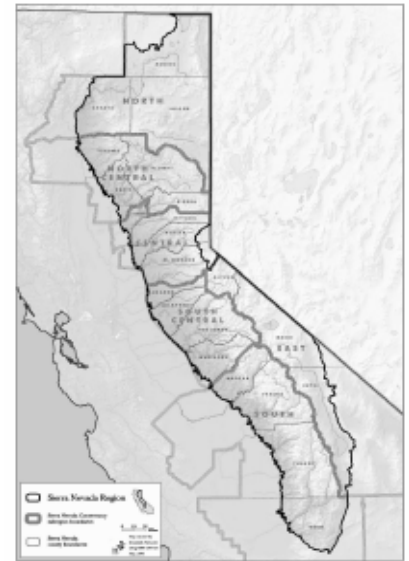
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC or Conservancy) is a state agency within the Resources Agency. Created by bi-partisan legislation, co-authored by Assembly members John Laird and Tim Leslie, it was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in September 2004. It was created with the understanding that the economic and environmental well being of the Sierra Nevada and its communities are closely linked. The SNC is charged with a broad mission to be accomplished through a variety of activities.

The 2006 SNC Strategic Plan will guide operations over the next five years. The plan describes the mission of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and provides a foundation for program development and activities to achieve the Conservancy's mission. The plan meets the requirements of the statute creating the SNC (Public Resources Code Section 33345).

This Strategic Plan contains important information that defines the SNC and how it operates. Key information includes:

- An agency **vision statement** describing the desired future condition of the SNC's jurisdictional area;
- A **mission statement** that reflects the charge given to the SNC by the State Legislature and the Governor;
- A **set of principles** that guide the operations and interactions of the organization;
- **External and internal assessments** that describe the context in which the SNC will carry out its programs;
- A series of **Organizational Strategies and Goals** that describe the steps necessary to create a successful organization; and
- A set of **Programmatic Goals and Actions** that create a sound foundation for the implementation of various programs the SNC is empowered to carry out. (Specific timeframes for these actions will be developed in the next phase of program and guideline development.)

This plan will undergo a full public review process, including six public workshops, one in each subregion. Following the workshops, the plan will be reviewed by the Board at its June 1, 2006 meeting. A revised plan will be released for additional public review following that meeting.



It will reflect public comments and Board direction. Final approval is anticipated at the July 20, 2006 board meeting.

SNC will modify the plan as needed to adapt to new information, changed circumstances and unanticipated events. Any plan modifications will be made through an open, public process. The plan will be reviewed annually, with a comprehensive review occurring at least every five years.

A copy of this plan and other information about the strategic planning process and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy can be found by visiting www.sierranevada.ca.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY.....	4
Vision	4
Mission Statement.....	4
Description.....	4
Governance	4
Program Description	5
Program Areas.....	5
Project Concepts Identified by the Public.....	6
Decision Making and Monitoring	7
Agency Funding Sources	7
AGENCY GUIDING PRINCIPLES	8
How We Operate.....	8
Our Key Objectives.....	8
Implementing Our Programs.....	8
Working With Others	9
AGENCY ASSESSMENT	10
External Assessment	10
Environmental and Economic Challenges	10
Institutional Challenges.....	11
Resource Challenges	11
Positive Signs	12
Internal Assessment	13
Large Area.....	13
Complex Institutional Setting	13
Program Diversity	13
An Emphasis on Consultation and Collaboration	13
Complexity of Program Development and Implementation	14
AGENCY FIVE YEAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS.....	15
I. Create an Effective Organization.....	15
II. Use and Share Reliable Information.....	16
III. Increase Knowledge and Capacity	17
IV. Balanced Portfolio	18
V. Funding	18
AGENCY FIVE YEAR PROGRAMMATIC GOALS	19
Program Goal 1: Tourism and Recreation	20
Program Goal 2: Physical, Cultural, Archaeological, Historical, and Living Resources	21
Program Goal 3: Working Landscapes	22
Program Goal 4: Natural Disaster Risks	23
Program Goal 5: Water and Air Quality	24
Program Goal 6: Regional Economy	25
Program Goal 7: Public Lands	26
NEXT STEPS.....	27
GLOSSARY	28
List of Appendices	30
Appendix A: Methodology Statement – Internal Planning Process.....	30
Appendix B: Summary of Agency Duties and Authorities.....	31
Appendix C: Project Suggestions from 2005 Community Meetings.....	34

ABOUT THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

Thoughts about the Conservancy

The 25 million acres of the conservancy reach from Kern County to the Oregon border.

The Conservancy will not only support environmental preservation but assist the regional economy, preserve working landscapes and provide increased opportunities for tourism. It is an example of economy and environment in harmony.

The 25 million acres within the new conservancy are a gift to the people of California, a gift that we have now guaranteed will keep on giving. Our children and grandchildren, visitors from far and wide, will see and enjoy the same Sierra Nevada that we value so much today.

*Governor
Arnold
Schwarzenegger
September 27, 2004*

Vision

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy exists to promote a healthy future for the Sierra Nevada. The Conservancy vision for the future is:

The Sierra Nevada is a thriving place with rich physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources. The healthy, diverse economy allows for sustainable communities and recognizes the value of working landscapes. Residents and visitors enjoy a wide spectrum of recreational and cultural experiences, well-maintained public lands, high quality water and air and communities protected from natural disasters.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is to support efforts that improve the environmental and economic well being of the Sierra Nevada region, its communities and its citizens through collaboration and cooperation with local governments and other interested parties.

Description

The SNC is a State agency within the Resources Agency. Created by bi-partisan legislation, co-authored by Assembly members John Laird and Tim Leslie, it was signed in to law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in September 2004.

The Conservancy's service area covers approximately 25 million acres, nearly 25% of California's land area. This area is considerably larger than that of any other existing state conservancy: it contains the mountains and foothills of the Sierra Nevada range, and certain neighboring areas including the Mono Basin, Owens Valley, and a part of the southern Cascade region (including the Pit River watershed). The service area covers all or portions of 22 counties, from Modoc County in the north to Kern County in the south. It is one of the most significant natural and biologically diverse regions (with related socio-economic benefits) in the world.

Governance

The Conservancy is governed by a 16-member board, including 13 voting members and 3 nonvoting liaison advisers, all appointed under Public Resources Code section 33321. Members include:

- State Secretary for Resources (or his/her designee)
- State Director of Finance (or his/her designee)
- Three members of the public appointed by the Governor
- Two members of the public, one each appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate Rules Committee
- Six county supervisors whose districts are within the Region, each representing one of the six Sierra Nevada subregions
- Three non-voting Federal liaison advisers, one each from the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Program Description

The law creating the SNC outlines its mission. All SNC activities are based on the principles of balance, cooperation and equity, and:

- Support efforts that advance both environmental preservation and the economic well-being of Sierra residents in a complementary manner;
- Work in collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties in carrying out the SNC's mission; and
- Make every effort to ensure that, over time, Conservancy funding and other efforts are spread equitably across each of the various subregions and among the program areas, with adequate allowance for the variability of costs associated with individual regions and types of projects.

Program Areas

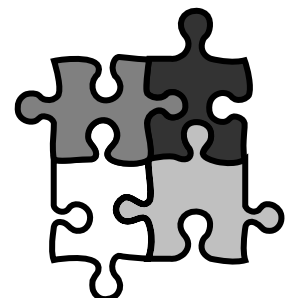
The law also describes programs the SNC should provide. This strategic plan guides those programs, activities and projects including efforts to:

- Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation;
- Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources;
- Aid in the preservation of working landscapes;
- Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires;
- Protect and improve water and air quality;
- Assist the regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's program;
- Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

Things the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Can Do:

- Award grants and loans;
- Develop projects and programs designed to further its purpose;
- Facilitate collaborative planning efforts;
- Enter into agreements and contracts with willing participants;
- Encourage and initiate collaboration and cooperation among other governmental entities and the public;
- Provide technical information, expertise, program and project development and other non-financial assistance to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations.

(For more detailed on Conservancy authority see Appendix B)



Project Concepts Identified by the Public

During a series of workshops held during 2005, members of the public suggested a number of possible projects appropriate for the SNC.

The list (see box this page), in alphabetical order, offers a small sample of the types of things the Conservancy could consider to improve and enhance the region (See Appendix C for a full list of activities meeting attendees suggested could be considered for SNC projects).

During Spring 2006 the SNC will gather additional ideas at six public meetings held to review this plan. The SNC intends to include those findings as part of its analysis of priorities and program goals.

**Small Sample of
Public Generated Project Concepts**

Communications: high-speed internet; teleconferencing; environmental education.

Funding: easements; critical acquisitions of high resource value lands; public lands maintenance and improvements.

Infrastructure: public transportation; water and wastewater systems.

Resources: hunting and fishing opportunities; interpretative scenic byways; bike trails; water and air quality; forest health and sustainable forestry; fuels reduction/fire safe activities.

Socioeconomic: health care quality and access; arts in the region; housing affordability/availability; community and visitor centers; agricultural, historical, cultural and ecological tourism.

Technical Assistance: local government land use planning; preservation of community character, cultural resources, historical buildings and settings; grant writing; promotion of tourism.

Other: The public also suggested the SNC could provide a neutral forum for policy discussions; and increase overall effectiveness of the region by supporting research and monitoring of initiatives.

Decision Making and Monitoring

The SNC will use reliable information and sound science in decision-making and will constantly assess the effectiveness of its programs. One goal is to ensure the Conservancy builds upon existing information and identifies where key gaps or weaknesses may exist. Also key is ensuring useful decision-making information is collected and made available for use by others.

The SNC will provide for research and monitoring activities in support of its mission. Monitoring will allow the Conservancy to refine or modify programs and promote adaptive management based on the results.

Agency Funding Sources

The SNC's base budget¹ currently consists of funding from the California Environmental License Plate Fund. Additional funding for the implementation of the Conservancy's programs is expected to come from future bond funding or other special funding sources. The SNC may also receive land and resources from gifts, bequests or donations.

¹ The budget for basic operational needs.

AGENCY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The SNC has a number of principles that serve to guide the organization's operation into the future:

How We Operate

- We conduct operations openly. Decision-making will be transparent, and we always strive to improve communications throughout the region.
- We strive to maintain neutrality so all interested parties are provided an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the SNC's activities.

Our Key Objectives

- We seek to “add value” and build upon existing community and regional efforts.
- We bring a regional focus to the issues of the Sierra Nevada, collecting and sharing information across the region and communicating the benefits that accrue from the region.
- We encourage community-based solutions and will assist communities with technical expertise, information and resources necessary to achieve local solutions.
- We use reliable information and sound science in making decisions, identifying opportunities to fill information and technical gaps and building on and expanding community information.

Implementing Our Programs

- We develop program priorities considering the input received through community outreach efforts and seek to meet community needs, recognizing local and regional differences, through program and organizational flexibility.
- We give priority to multi-benefit projects and activities (those that address more than one of the SNC's objectives).
- We encourage projects and activities that leverage other governmental, private and non-profit funding and non-financial capabilities.
- We evaluate projects considering what is occurring on surrounding lands, cognizant of potential impacts to those landscapes.
- Where possible we purchase and/or create incentives for purchase of resources for goods and services within the Sierra Nevada region. We diligently seek opportunities to improve the economic well-being of communities in the region.

Working With Others

- We emphasize cooperation with local governments, and provide information, technical assistance and financial support to assist in meeting mutual goals.
- We collaborate with other state and federal agencies to achieve research, project funding and program goals.
- We respect the mission, responsibilities and obligations of other agencies

AGENCY ASSESSMENT

As a new organization, SNC needs to create strategies and actions and recognize the many factors supporting or creating barriers to effectiveness. The assessment below, based on a review of existing information from numerous sources and public input, summarizes key factors.

External Assessment

One of the most significant natural and biologically diverse regions in the world, the Sierra Nevada region constitutes about 25% of California's land area. It serves as home to over 600,000 Californians, and provides recreational opportunities for millions. The region also:

1. Provides more than 60% of California's most valuable commodity, water, the vast majority of which is used for residential, agricultural and environmental uses outside of the region;
2. Supports 212 communities dependent upon natural resources for jobs, recreation, and community character;
3. Sustains a growing tourism industry involving more than 50 million recreation visit days a year;
4. Supports half of all plants found in California;
5. Provides habitats for 66% of the bird and mammal species and about 50% of the reptile and amphibian species in California;
6. Is home to more than 400 species of terrestrial vertebrates and in excess of 320 species of aquatic invertebrates (the region contains more endemic aquatic invertebrates than any other ecological region in the world); and
7. Produces from 33% to 50% of the State's annual timber supply.

Environmental and Economic Challenges

In recent years, a great deal of attention has been paid to the significant environmental and economic challenges facing the region. In fact, the creation of the SNC was largely a product of this recognition.

Key Sierra Nevada Facts

- The Sierra Nevada is the third fastest growing region in California. Some estimates predict the population will triple by 2040. The area is experiencing rapid retiree and commuter resident growth, and large transient recreation populations that increase resource pressures.
- For some time, the Sierra Nevada's economy has been diversifying from a resource-based economy to one increasingly dependent on tourism and related services; specialized goods and services tied to the state economy; and health, financial, and other services needed by the growing population.
- Many parts of the region face significant threats from natural disaster, in particular the risk of catastrophic fire.
- There is increasing conflict over various land-use decisions in certain portions of the region and over regional resource conservation strategies.
- In some Sierra communities there are a growing number of children in poverty, declining personal incomes, low literacy rates, and outdated communications infrastructure.

The scale, scope, and complexity of resources, funding and institutional needs, far exceed the current capacity of the private nonprofit sector and existing public programs to meet identified needs. All these external factors, as well as others, dramatically affect the natural resources and community. They have resulted, or could result, in the following:

Institutional Challenges	Resource Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A relative lack of public funding committed to the Sierra Nevada region (excluding Lake Tahoe); the area received only about 1% of all State bond funds designated for conservation purposes from 1996-2001; 2. A lack of institutional and funding capacity and to deal with the issues within the region. Many local and State agencies are hard pressed to deal with their basic responsibilities because of budgetary shortfalls. Many local governments and organizations in the region are in need of technical assistance and funding to develop and implement projects; 3. A lack of cohesive and comprehensive State policy on investment objectives for acquisition, restoration, economic development, recreation and tourism, and resource management activities within the region; and 4. A lack of knowledge about the importance of the Sierra Nevada region by a majority of Californian's living outside of the area. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapid population growth in some areas break up the ecosystem and working landscapes and increase the risk of wildfire along the urban interface; 2. Job losses in industries such as timber, agricultural and ranching, along with the reduction in mining activity, place additional economic burdens on many communities that are distant from the metropolitan economies on either side of the region; 3. Impaired water quality in many of the Sierra Nevada's rivers; 4. Adverse effects on land and water species and their habitat, many of which are already facing declining health and numbers; 5. Lack of affordable housing in many communities, particularly workforce housing; 6. Reduced access to quality health care; 7. Loss of historical and cultural character of communities; and 8. Lack of needed community infrastructure and public services such as roads, quality health care transportation systems, wastewater treatment, storm-water management, etc.

Positive Signs

Even with these challenges, progress is being made within the region. The past decade has seen a substantial increase in collaborative planning efforts by government agencies and the non-governmental community. There are a substantial number of public and private groups, (representing business, the environment, tourism, ranching and agriculture), governments, and other sectors, working collaboratively to come up with sustainable solutions. There are a number of local government efforts taking this approach to address complex resource and infrastructure issues.

Many groups have focused on watershed management, community planning, reducing the risk of catastrophic fire, preserving working landscapes and protection of critical habitat.

A 2002 survey recorded the following groups within the Sierra Nevada region:

- **More than 22 operating land trusts and support organizations**
- **18 active resource conservation districts**
- **More than 20 Coordinated Resource Management Planning groups**
- **Approximately 75 community Fire Safe Councils**

These efforts provide SNC opportunity to partner and collaborate and for leveraging of funds to achieve common goals.

Internal Assessment

SNC serves a broad range of purposes. In order to develop effective programs and set priorities, it must actively engage the public, local governments, other state and federal agencies, tribal organizations, and interested parties with a particular focus on subregional outreach. Outreach allows input on strategic program planning and program guidelines and provides important information as to changes occurring in the region.

Large Area

The Conservancy's service area includes approximately 25 million acres and all or part of 22 counties. This area creates significant transportation, communication and operational challenges. An effective response requires strategic deployment of organizational resources and the means to effectively communicate with the public.

Complex Institutional Setting

The SNC operates in a complex institutional setting. The Board composition alone includes the Executive

Branch (Resources Agency, Department of Finance and 3 gubernatorial appointees), the Legislature (Speaker of the Assembly and Senate Rules Committee appointees), representatives from 22 counties, and 3 federal agencies (the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management). There are over 200 communities (more than 20 incorporated cities), 30-40 special districts and dozens of local non-governmental organizations within the region.

Program Diversity

Rather than patching together separate agency programs, the SNC will use a comprehensive and integrated approach to address regional needs. However, this approach results in program diversity and complexity. As noted earlier, the SNC is charged with seven separate program areas and there are a wide variety of tools available to address each area. SNC's program complexity is magnified by rapid regional change, driven, in part, by population growth within and immediately adjacent to the region. Some estimates predict the population is expected to triple in the next 30-40 years. As the economic structure of the region diversifies from one primarily dependent on commodity-based industries to one driven by new services, the protection, conservation and

restoration of natural resources will require new approaches.

The potential conversion of working landscapes to residential and commercial uses would lead to increased demand for stewardship on remaining lands. The Conservancy needs to be responsive and take advantage of opportunities resulting from various planning efforts.

An Emphasis on Consultation and Collaboration

The SNC is committed to working collaboratively and cooperatively with local governments, federal and state agencies, tribal organizations, the private sector, nonprofit organizations and the public in developing and implementing its programs. It must cooperate and consult with the City or County wherever a real property interest is being acquired, and with public water systems where a project may affect the system.

Additionally, is it necessary to closely monitor a host of Federal, State and local planning processes, as well coordinate activities with other State agencies. In order to be successful, the SNC must determine where it can add value, building upon community efforts and respecting responsibilities of other government agencies.

*Internal Assessment continued ...***Complexity of Program Development and Implementation**

SNC is to be managed by clear and understandable guidelines that create a “level playing field,” (fair and even access to SNC processes) for all interests. This strategic plan is the first step of developing these guidelines. The guidelines are to reflect analysis of program (resource) requirements at the regional and subregional levels; institutional capacities; funding needs for each program; and an

assessment of Federal, State and local plans for each program objective.

In order to create guidelines, the Conservancy will need personnel with sufficient expertise and adequate resources to:

- Develop and analyze regional information
- Engage in required consultative and subregional liaison processes
- Review existing funding programs affecting the region
- Review project proposals
- Provide technical assistance to local

governments and nonprofit organizations

The Conservancy will also need highly developed communication and data systems to serve staff, the public, and to allow for public participation at Board meetings and workshops.

Another charge is to create an education and communication plan to support increased understanding of the region and subregions by all parties. By educating citizens about Sierra Nevada and its resources they can assist in supporting enhancement efforts.

AGENCY FIVE YEAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC GOALS

During the next five years the SNC will build an effective infrastructure to implement its charter, develop strategies, and set priorities for decision making on projects and site-specific activities. In order to carry out its mission, the SNC will focus on five key organizational areas:

- **Create An Effective Organization**
- **Use and Share Reliable Information**
- **Increase Knowledge and Capacity**
- **Ensure a Balanced Portfolio**
- **Identify Funding Needs**

I. Create an Effective Organization

In its initial years the SNC must define key purposes, functions and project goals and create an organizational structure to support them. Immediate activities include hiring staff; adopting rules, regulations and guidelines for the SNC's operations;

designing organizational management structures; completing required reports and plans; and establishing organization facilities.

The SNC organizational structure will emphasize flexibility and recognize the Sierra Nevada's differences and similarities. It will address challenges of serving an area as large

and diverse as the Sierra Nevada region by focusing on its core mission and through partnership with other governments and organizations. The structure will emphasize community interaction and build on and enhance the existing infrastructure.

Strategic Goal 1

- Goal 1.1: Establish SNC interim headquarters in Auburn (April 2006). Determine location of a permanent headquarters location that will meet the SNC's needs and add economic value to the community (July 2007)
- Goal 1.2: Determine satellite office locations based on available staff and resources and operational needs (July 2007)
- Goal 1.3: Ensure an open and transparent decision-making process by adopting understandable rules, guidelines, and procedures for SNC business (Ongoing)
- Goal 1.4: Conduct a robust public outreach and feedback program within the region and in other key geographic areas important to the success of the program (Ongoing)

II. Use and Share Reliable Information

SNC will base decisions on reliable, best available information by engaging in data collection, analysis and sharing.

Numerous agencies, departments, districts and others maintain information to make daily decisions affecting the region. However, for a variety of reasons, the information is not always easily available to others. The SNC will work with local decision makers to determine information needs and define ways

to make quality information readily available.

Non-profit and for-profit businesses and organizations, government agencies and the academic community have developed a significant amount of high quality regional research and information. The SNC will identify and incorporate as much existing data as possible into its information collection and dissemination efforts.

In addition to acquiring reliable and necessary information, the SNC proposes to engage community leaders and others in defining

information priorities and dissemination methods.

The SNC will make information widely available for use by others using multiple strategies and tools with an emphasis on internet and other emerging technology.

Beyond acquiring information, the SNC will focus on means to improve the overall capacity of communication systems in the region. Some areas in the Sierra Nevada do not have access to high-speed internet, or even basic internet service at reasonable rates.

Strategic Goal 2

- Goal 2.1: Conduct an information needs assessment to determine the type of information needed, preferred dissemination methods, technological needs and access to data limitations. This should include an inventory of relevant information relating to the SNC's mission. (January 2007)
- Goal 2.2: Define overall data acquisition and dissemination requirements and a strategy to address statutory and organizational needs, as well as community needs. Build upon and enhance existing information infrastructure. (July 2007)

III. Increase Knowledge and Capacity

The Sierra communities have a rich history of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. Currently, many local activities, consistent with the SNC's mission, are underway. The SNC will build upon these efforts and assist communities with building and creating capacity by

providing information, technical assistance and other resources.

SNC recognizes goals and activities must be flexible enough to address the wide variety of regional issues and concerns and to adapt to new information or situations. "One size" will

not fit all, nor will static programs be effective.

Education efforts, demonstration projects, and research and monitoring efforts designed to increase knowledge will be encouraged and supported.

Strategic Goal 3

- Goal 3.1: Conduct a regional assessment to determine existing and potential education, shared learning and research projects that the SNC can support and enhance. (January 2006)
- Goal 3.2: Based on this assessment and the information technology assessment, develop a community capacity building plan, identifying technological, communication, technical assistance and other infrastructure needs. (July 2007)
- Goal 3.3: Develop an education and communication plan to support increased understanding of the region and subregions by all parties. (October 2006)

IV. Balanced Portfolio

The SNC will place a priority on projects and activities that provide multiple benefits consistent with program goals. The SNC will make every effort to, over time; allocate resources and activities equitably across the subregions and

program areas. It should be recognized that in the initial years of operations the diversity, complexity and uniqueness of the region and the subregions might create challenges in achieving this objective.

The SNC will also identify efforts and activities with region-wide application and benefit. This will include communication efforts, enhancement of information technology infrastructure and information collection and dissemination.

Strategic Goal 4

- Goal 4.1: Develop, in collaboration with other organizations, an economic and environmental well being index to monitor indicators related to the SNC program areas. This will include an index to monitor progress using key indicators in each of the program areas. (January 2007)
- Goal 4.2: Develop a program activity tracking system to ensure equitable distribution of resources across subregions and programs. (January 2007)
-

V. Funding

At this time the California Environmental License Plate Fund is the base source of SNC funds. Additional funding (primarily for grants and loans) is expected to come from future bond funding or other special funding sources. The SNC will engage in a number of important activities using base funding. The SNC may also receive resources from gifts, bequests or donations.

Strategic Goal 5

- Goal 5.1: Develop and communicate funding needs of the region to decision makers at all levels. (Ongoing, initial needs assessment by October 2006)
- Goal 5.2: Leverage and improve funding options and opportunities by identifying and communicating potential funding sources to those engaged in project activities consistent with SNC's mission. (Ongoing, with an initial inventory of funding sources by October 2006)

AGENCY FIVE YEAR PROGRAMMATIC GOALS

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Program Goals

1. Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation
2. Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources
3. Aid in the preservation of working landscapes
4. Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires
5. Protect and improve water and air quality
6. Assist the regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's program
7. Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public

The statute creating the SNC charged the organization with seven program goals (see box on this page). This strategic plan identifies a set of actions which will serve as the foundation for development of specific strategies and projects designed to achieve these goals.

SNC will develop program specific strategies and actions with measurable outcomes and timelines following approval of this plan by the Board. This blueprint for action will be developed using information gained from public input and other information gathering, development and analysis. Following are the program areas with key actions identified.

Program Goal 1: Tourism and Recreation

Provide Increased Opportunities for Tourism and Recreation

Tourism and recreational opportunity are essential to the Sierra Nevada's changing economy and major contributors to economic growth. In 1999, expenditures by overnight campers for private and public campgrounds were over \$560 million, more than a sixth of such expenditures statewide.² These sectors continue to grow and provide more jobs and wages than many other sectors combined. Between 1992 and 1998 the jobs generated by travel spending alone grew from about 6,500 to over 9,000.³ The growth is driven by the creation of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones, based on

providing valued-added services on both public and private lands.

Recreation opportunities in the Sierra Nevada offer nearly every type of outdoor recreation from camping to snowshoeing, hunting to bird watching, and rock climbing to motorized sports, plus everything in between. In fact, some estimates indicate there are as many as 50 million visitor days on public lands a year.

The Conservancy is mandated to provide increasing opportunities for tourism and recreation and it is clear that this is a major economic force for the region.

At the same time it is important to note that some forms of recreation can create impacts on natural resources, especially if not conducted consistent with prescribed rules and restrictions. Likewise, increased tourism could create stress upon existing infrastructure in many Sierra communities.

It is crucial that increased tourism and recreation occur consistent with sustainable practices as well as recognition of community infrastructure needs.

Program Action 1

- Action 1.1: Identify top priority tourism and recreational opportunities, including those in non-traditional activities.
- Action 1.2: Develop and make available a comprehensive guide to recreational and tourism opportunities in the Sierra, in cooperation with other organizations within the region.
- Action 1.3: Identify funding sources, specific to the program that may be utilized to complement SNC activities in order to achieve objectives.
- Action 1.4: Develop and make available a list of resources, consultants, organizations, etc. with skills, expertise and knowledge to assist communities with projects consistent with this goal.

² *Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Assessment, Socio-Economic Assessment, Wildland Outdoor Recreation Assessment. p. 31*

³ *FRAP, Assessment, Socio-Economic Assessment, Wildland Outdoor Recreation Assessment, p. 29*

Program Goal 2: Physical, Cultural, Archaeological, Historical, and Living Resources

Protect, Conserve, and Restore the Region's Physical, Cultural, Archaeological, Historical, and Living Resources

The Sierra Nevada is a special place with many areas of interest.

The extraordinary landscape draws residents and visitors. Few places on the planet have such beauty, ecological diversity, archaeological and cultural and historic assets.

Humans have wandered the Sierra for about 10,000 years, and have been a factor in the region ecology for 3,000 to 5,000 years.

Early people used fire to improve the land for food, hunting and gathering and to generate plants to make baskets and serve other needs. Later, the Sierra hosted California's famous gold rush and the attendant 49'ers seeking fame and fortune.

Increasing pressures including growth, economic decline, the risk of catastrophic fire, climate change and decreasing water

and air quality put these important features at risk.

By 2040, almost 20 percent of the Sierra's current private forests and rangelands could be affected by projected development.⁴ In addition, 68 percent of Sierra area forests and rangelands are ecologically at risk from wildfire.⁵

Program Action 2

- Action 2.1: Identify priority projects that protect key resources in each area included above. For lands in need of protection, use of conservation easements and similar mechanisms will serve as the primary approach.
- Action 2.2: Identify critical information needs at the regional and community level to assist in assessing resource protection needs.
- Action 2.3: Identify specific funding sources that may complement SNC activities in order to achieve program objectives.
- Action 2.4: Develop a strategy to work in partnership with local governments to identify information, assistance and resources needed to support community projects that protect, restore, and conserve these important assets.
- Action 2.5: Develop a strategy to work in partnership with local governments to identify information, technical assistance and resources that would be of value in local land use decision making.

⁴ FRAP Assessment Summary, p. 89

⁵ FRAP Assessment Chapter 3. Health - Wildfire Risks to Assets, p. 12

Program Goal 3: Working Landscapes

Aid in the Preservation of Working Landscapes

Working landscapes are lands producing goods and commodities from the natural environment (most commonly farms, ranches and forests). These lands often provide important contributions to habitat, biodiversity, water quality, air quality and open space that benefit everyone. Based on landowner skill, resources, and voluntary conservation and restoration actions, the benefits can be substantial.

Although management responsibilities and costs rest with the landowner, in many communities, these lands are an important part of the local economy, culture and

social fabric. Working landscapes represent a scenic and historic asset for the region, covering approximately 36 percent of California's forests and rangelands.⁶

Many of these working landscapes are at risk because landowners have difficulty keeping their businesses economically viable. In many places, development pressure is increasing and the potential economic gain for converting the lands to other uses is substantial. The resulting conversion of use is often detrimental to natural resource values that remain.

In some instances the management of public

lands in the area affects landowners. Many are dependent on availability of government lands to create a scale of operation to make their own endeavors profitable. For example, in the Eastern Sierra 95 percent of land ownership is held by federal and other governments, 2.5 percent in ranches, and 2.5 percent in other private ownership.⁷ In this area many private enterprises rely on these public lands for ranching, recreation use, etc. In addition, government policies designed to respond to other resource issues can have unintended consequences and destabilize private working landscapes dependent on a mix of resources.

Program Action 3

- Action 3.1: Identify private landowners interested in preserving their working landscapes through conservation easements and similar mechanisms.
- Action 3.2: Identify incentive-based programs (complementing and enhancing regulatory efforts) to assist in achieving environmental protection and natural resource conservation objectives and aid in preserving working landscapes.

⁶ FRAP Assessment Summary, p. 75

⁷ FRAP Report to the California Biodiversity Council, September 18, 1997

Program Goal 4: Natural Disaster Risks

Reduce the Risk of Natural Disasters, such as Wildfires

The Sierra Nevada geography, climate and vegetation make it particularly susceptible to natural disasters, particularly floods, wildfires and landslides. Effective fire suppression efforts in recent decades have increased fuel build-up in many areas. At the same time active public land forest management (timber harvesting and fuels management) was also reduced.

As this occurred, substantial residential and commercial growth occurred in historic

wildlands. Increased wildland-urban interface increased natural disaster risks. For example, 79 percent of housing units in the Sierra wildland-urban interface are at significant risk from wildfire (Very High or Extreme fire threat).⁸

In recent years, there has been an increase in efforts to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire. Substantial federal funding has been allocated to many of the National Forests in the Sierra, local Fire Safe Councils have been formed in many communities and there

is a growing awareness of the problem among local decision makers.

Similar investments are made for landslides and floods but often after a fire event. Due to changing land use patterns, official floodplain and other geographic hazard mapping are not always up to date and new construction occurs in those areas.

Sierra communities must also determine the potential effects of climate change and develop strategies to deal with changes.

Program Action 4

- Action 4.1: Work with state and federal land managers to identify projects and activities that will reduce risks of natural disaster on public lands.
- Action 4.2: Assist communities in the development and implementation of firesafe community plans and other community based plans addressing natural disasters.
- Action 4.3: Work with federal, state and local fire agencies to identify opportunities for SNC to assist in risk reduction efforts on private lands.

⁸ FRAP Assessment Summary, p. 102)

Program Goal 5: Water and Air Quality

Protect and improve water and air quality.

Water

The Sierra Nevada mountain range has numerous major rivers, hundreds of lakes, and thousands of miles of streams that form 24 watersheds. These watersheds are the lifeblood of California as they contribute over 60% of California's water needs, primarily to areas outside of the Sierra Nevada.

Many watersheds retain negative impacts of historic land uses, ongoing land use changes, and episodic, intense wildfires that have degraded water and air quality and aquatic habitat conditions. Historic mining activities also have significant water quality impacts from both sediment and heavy metals. In addition some forms of recreation can create impacts on water resources, especially if not conducted

consistent with prescribed rules, regulations and restrictions.

Today, new construction, mining, timber and range management, residential and commercial land use, and road construction are all activities that are regulated to address impacts on water quality. Regulation takes place at the state, regional and local level. In addition, local communities are dealing with issues such as wastewater treatment and storm water runoff that can affect water quality.

The SNC will work closely with these regulatory agencies and the communities to determine efforts that will contribute to meeting and improving water quality.

Air

While California faces some of the nation's most difficult air quality challenges, many Sierra

communities enjoy some of state's cleanest air.

However, in the more urbanized areas of the Sierra Nevada, as in other parts of California, motor vehicles are significant contributors of air pollution. Some areas, particularly in the foothill region, receive additional negative impacts from urban pollution carried by wind.

Air quality issues in the Sierra are further complicated by the role of fire. Catastrophic fires can create substantial amounts of pollution and can be particularly intense during active burning. At the same, land managers use fire as a tool to reduce the risk of wild fire through prescribed burns. Reconciling land management activities and air quality standards continues to be a challenge.

Program Action 5

- Action 5.1: Identify incentive based programs that complement and enhance regulatory efforts to assist in achieving environmental protection and sustainability goals.
- Action 5.2: Develop and make available a list of funding sources, resources, consultants, organizations, etc. with skills, expertise and knowledge to assist communities with projects consistent with this goal.

Program Goal 6: Regional Economy

Assist the regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's program.

The Sierra region needs to create more sustainable economies.

The Sierra Nevada economy is rooted in its natural environment by tourism, recreation, sustainable resource management, the production of agricultural products and extraction of valuable minerals and building materials.

Many Sierra Nevada communities face ongoing economic challenges. At the same time, the

changing local economies described earlier in this document present opportunities for greater diversification. Many communities are in need of assistance in developing efforts to attract sustainable economic activity.

In carrying out its programs, the SNC will support developing the needed information technology and other communications infrastructure that will help

attract economic activity, particularly activity that reinvests in the region.

SNC will carry out its operations with an emphasis on providing economic benefits for Sierra communities. This will include the purchase of goods and services locally, conducting meetings and events in the region and assisting local businesses in gaining more state business opportunities.

Program Action 6

- Action 6.1: To the maximum extent feasible, focus SNC's expenditures and conduct activities within the region, utilizing community businesses.
- Action 6.2: When investing in SNC's information technology system and other infrastructure, factor in approaches to increase value to the region.
- Action 6.3: Identify resources and assistance that will benefit communities in efforts to improve their economic well-being.

Program Goal 7: Public Lands

Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

Well over half of the Sierra Nevada region is owned by a public agency, with the federal government being the single largest landowner. These lands provide substantial recreation opportunities for

Sierra residents and visitors. However, with public use come management challenges relating to law enforcement, resource protection and development and

maintenance of facilities. The SNC will look for opportunities to work with land management agencies to address these challenges and to increase the quality and diversity of use and enjoyment of public lands.

Program Action 7

Action 7.1: Identify community priorities for specific opportunities to enhance public use of public lands.

Action 7.2: Develop, in consultation with state and federal land managers, sustainable projects that meet this objective, consistent with the land management agencies' objectives and responsibilities.

NEXT STEPS

The SNC will begin the implementation of this plan upon approval by the Board. Development of program guidelines, consistent with the goals and actions identified in this plan will also begin following adoption.

This strategic plan will be comprehensively reviewed within five years by the Board, although adjustments to the plan may occur prior to that if warranted because of new information or changing conditions. The Board will also review progress on implementing the plan annually to determine appropriate program adjustments. All changes to the plan will be made through an open, public process.

GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this plan, the following terms have the following meanings:

Adaptive management: Design and implement programs in a highly flexible manner, and revise management strategies depending on information gained from continuous monitoring to achieve desired outcomes.

Board: Governing Board of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Conservancy: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Ecosystem: Abbreviation of the term, ecological system; A collection of plants, animals and other living organisms, living together with their environment and functioning as a loose unit; a dynamic and complex whole, interacting as an ecological unit.

Fee interest, fee title, fee estate, or fee simple: Outright title to, and dominion over, a parcel of land.

Fund: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy Fund, a special fund within the State Treasury.

Less-than-fee interest in land: An interest in land -- such as an easement, right-of-way, or leasehold -- which is lesser than the fee title, and which has been transferred by the previous (fee) owner (or a predecessor) to another party (people, corporation, etc.).

Local government: a city, county, district, or joint powers authority

Nonprofit organization: a private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status and that has among its principal charitable purposes preservation of land for scientific, educational, recreational, scenic, or open-space opportunities; or, protection of the natural environment, preservation or enhancement of wildlife; or, preservation of cultural and historical resources; or, efforts to provide for the enjoyment of public lands.

Region or Sierra Nevada Region: the area lying within the Counties of Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba, which is more specifically described in Public Resources Code section 33302(f), and excluding both of the following: (1) The Lake Tahoe Region, as described in Section 66905.5 of the Government Code, where it is defined as “region.” (2) The San Joaquin River Parkway, as described in Public Resources Code section 32510.

Riparian: Areas adjacent to streams and water bodies. Usually referred to when discussing animals and plants that require this type of environment to survive.

Subregions: the six subregions of the Sierra Nevada Region, described as follows:

(1) The north Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Lassen, Modoc, and Shasta.

- (2) The north central Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Butte, Plumas, Sierra, and Tehama.
- (3) The central Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, and Yuba.
- (4) The south central Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Tuolumne.
- (5) The east Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Alpine, Inyo, and Mono.
- (6) The south Sierra subregion, comprising the Counties of Fresno, Kern, Madera, and Tulare.

Sustainable: An activity that can be repeated over a long period of time without causing damage to the environment or the community.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Tribal organization: an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians and is identified on pages 52829 to 52835, inclusive, of Number 250 of Volume 53 (December 29, 1988) of the Federal Register, as that list may be updated or amended from time to time.

Watershed: A unit of land that is all drained by a unique stream or river. Smaller stream-based watersheds nest within larger river-based watersheds.

Working landscapes: Working landscapes are lands producing goods and commodities from the natural environment (most commonly farms, ranches and forests). For many communities, these lands are an important part of the local economy, culture and social fabric.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Methodology Statement – Internal Planning Process

Appendix B: Summary of Agency Duties and Authorities

Appendix C: Summary of 2005 Community Meetings

Appendix A: Methodology Statement – Internal Planning Process

This draft strategic plan was prepared in accordance with the California State Department of Finance Strategic Planning Guidelines. As a new organization the Conservancy was fortunate to receive information from variety government agencies, and non-governmental for profit and non-profit organizations and businesses. Many of the materials provided were incorporated in part or in whole in the Organizational Assessment and to prepare the program and goal statements. Where direct quotes were used we attempted to provide the source document but also wish to acknowledge the many approaches and concepts graciously provided for this review by others.

In addition, the public provided initial input during testimony at Conservancy Board meetings, with written submissions, and during public workshops conducted in the region in 2005. The next iteration of this document will incorporate information gathered from the public including from hearings to be held in the region during April and May 2006, as well as direction from the Board provided at the June 1, 2006 meeting.

Appendix B: Summary of Agency Duties and Authorities

Overview

The Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act authorizes the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to “carry out projects and activities to further the purposes of this [Act] throughout the [Sierra Nevada] Region.” The Act directs the Conservancy to “make every effort to ensure that, over time, Conservancy funding and other efforts are spread equitably among each of the various subregions and among the state goal areas.” (Section 33341).⁹

The Act envisions the Conservancy will conduct its program “in cooperation with local governments, private business, nonprofit organizations, and the public” (Section 33301(d)).

Under the Act, the Conservancy has various powers and authority so it may carry out programs. Some key ones are:

- (1) Grants or loans to eligible entities (people, incorporated business and organizations, etc.);
- (2) Conservancy acquisition of an interest in land from a willing seller;
- (3) Restoration, enhancement, or improvement of land;
- (4) Transfer of an interest in land, e.g., for long-term management; and
- (5) Funding and facilitating collaborative planning efforts which involve interested entities and groups within the Region.

In addition, the Conservancy is authorized:

- to provide technical assistance to eligible entities to support program and project development and implementation; and
- to conduct research and monitoring in connection with the development and implementation of the Conservancy’s program.

The Act also contains specific powers and authority relating to Conservancy income and revenue.

The Conservancy’s powers and authority are set forth in Division 23.3 of the California Public Resources Code, and are discussed in more detail below.

Summary by topic

Grants and Loans (Sections 33343-33344)

⁹ All section references are to the California Public Resources Code.

The Conservancy may make grants or loans to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations, in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. Conservancy grants or loans may be awarded for such purposes as:

- Developing projects and programs which are designed to further the purposes of the Act;
- Acquiring interests in real property, including both fee interests (absolute title) and less-than-fee-interests (e.g., conservation easements);
- Planning and designing the restoration, enhancement, or improvement of land;
- Carrying out the restoration, enhancement, or improvement of land;
- Conducting collaborative planning efforts.

Funds may be distributed only after the intended recipient enters into an agreement with the Conservancy. The Conservancy may require repayment of grant or loan funds and outlined conditions as appropriate. After approving a grant, the Conservancy may assist the grantee in carrying out the purposes of the grant.

Grants for acquisition of real property, and applications for such grants, are subject to various conditions. An entity that receives a grant or loan for acquisition of real property must provide for management of the acquired property.

Acquisition and Management of Interests in Land (Sections 33347 and 33349(a))

The Conservancy is authorized to acquire – but only from willing sellers or transferors – an interest in land, in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. However, the Conservancy may not purchase a fee interest (absolute title) in land, and it may not exercise the power of eminent domain (condemnation). If the Conservancy plans to buy an interest in a lot or parcel of land and it is worth more than a set amount (currently \$250,000), it has to be reviewed by the State Public Works Board.

The Conservancy must “take whatever actions are reasonably necessary and incidental to the management of lands or interests in lands under its ownership or control.” For that reason the Conservancy is allowed to make management agreements for the lands with public agencies as well as private parties.

Restoration, Enhancement, or Improvement of Land (Section 33349(b))

The Conservancy may “improve, restore, or enhance lands for the purpose of protecting the natural environment, improving public enjoyment of or public access to public lands, or to otherwise meet the objectives of this [Act],” and to “carry out the planning and design of those improvements or other measures.”

Transfer of Interests in Land (Section 33348)

The Conservancy may “lease, rent, sell, exchange, or otherwise transfer” interests in real property including vested rights which are severable from the property (sometimes known as “transferable development rights”).

Funding / Facilitating Collaborative Planning Efforts (Section 33346(a))

The Conservancy provide funds to facilitate collaborative planning efforts within the Region.

Other Activities (Sections 33346(b) and 33351)

The Conservancy “may provide and make available technical information, expertise, and other non-financial assistance to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations as it relates to its mission.

The Conservancy may also expend funds to conduct research and monitoring, in connection with the development and implementation of its program.

Consultation and Coordination (Section 33342)

The Conservancy shall cooperate and consult with the city or county, as the case may be, where a grant is proposed or an interest in real property is proposed to be acquired, and, as necessary and appropriate with a public water system. The Conservancy must also coordinate its efforts, as necessary or appropriate, with those of other State agencies,

Income and Revenue (Sections 33346.5 and 33352-33355)

The Conservancy may receive gifts, donations, an interest in real property, including an in-fee interest, subventions, grants, rents, royalties, and other assistance and funds from public and private sources. It may also fix and collect fees for direct services which it tenders, provided that the service is rendered at the request of the individual or entity receiving the service. The Conservancy’s may not charge more than the reasonable cost of providing the service.

All income from any source (including the proceeds from the transfer of any interest in land) is to be deposited in the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Fund, a separate fund within the State Treasury. The Legislature must authorize spending of the Fund. The Fund can only be used for the purposes of the Act.

Specifically Prohibited Activities (Sections 33347(c) and 33356)

The Conservancy may not exercise any of the following powers:

- Powers of a city or county to regulate land use.
- Any other powers to regulate activities on land (except when acting as the owner of an interest in the land, or under an agreement or other grant of authority from the owner of an interest in the land).
- Any powers over water rights held by others.
- Power of eminent domain (condemnation).

Appendix C: Project Suggestions from 2005 Community Meetings.**Community Well-being**

- Funding for easements
- Housing affordability/availability
- Need for community centers
- Access to Information Technology/Communications (high-speed internet, teleconferencing, etc.)
- Access to health care, improve health care
- Public transportation
- Preservation of cultural resources
- Preservation of historical buildings and settings
- Resource related activities/jobs creation (e.g.: biomass)
- Retaining community/historic character
- Encouraging of the arts in the region
- Assist local governments in land use planning efforts
- Assist communities with infrastructure needs (e.g.: water and wastewater systems)
- SNC to “buy local”
- Tribal rights and tourism
- Economic development for youth
- Promote small businesses
- Planning for new airport
- Preserve small communities

Tourism/Recreation

- Agricultural tourism
- Assist businesses and community in promotion of tourism
- Working landscapes tourism
- Historical tourism
- Ecotourism
- ADA compliant facilities
- Hunting and fishing opportunities
- Interpretative scenic byways
- Internet access to tourism/recreation opportunities in region
- Conversion of older infrastructure for recreational opportunities
- Assist state and federal agencies in increasing public access
- Develop visitor centers
- Balance recreational opportunities and resource development
- Assist with railroad trails, bike and walking trails

Resource Protection

- Assist in land use planning efforts of local governments
- Promote forest health
- Sustainable forestry
- Fuels reduction/fire safe activities
- Technical assistance and scientific data
- Land swap opportunities
- Environmental education
- Critical acquisitions
- Use of conservation easements for habitat protection and open space preservation
- Funding for public lands maintenance and improvements
- Water quality projects - build and clean community water systems
- Watershed management and river restoration
- Air quality projects

Education, Communication, Data Acquisition and Dissemination

- ID Native American archeological and cultural resources
- Compile project examples from other conservancies
- Provide technical assistance for grant writing, etc.
- Provide a neutral forum for policy discussions
- Facilitate necessary research and monitoring